

CONTENTS...

2 Head Start Dresses for Success

2 Run Ryan Run!

2 Community Services Promotes Earned Income Tax Credit and Arizona Self-Help Websites

2 Maricopa County Families Need to Host International Exchange Students

3 Special Transportation Services Transports Healthcare for the Homeless Clients

3 Kudos to Don Gutzman

3 *Work Matters* Survey

4 Around the County

4 HSD's Wellness Challenge

4 February Birthdays



Work Matters

Maricopa County's Human Services Department

February 2004

Head Start Biliteracy Conference



Mary Smith, Kathy Hayden, Elva Retana and Debbie Donofrio (left to right) sing a song to welcome attendees.

Linda Dorothy and Elizabeth Estrada prepare accessories for their memory books.

Claire Jacobs "samples" the frosting from a "cake" created by Marsha Johnson of Lakeshore School Supplies.

Approximately 400 individuals attended Maricopa County Head Start Division's Biliteracy Conference on January 16th.

Dr. Kathy Hayden welcomed everyone to the conference, and introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. Billie Enz of Arizona State University and New Directions Institute. Enz emphasized the importance of parents interaction with their children. She told the audience that when bilingual parents ask her which language she recommends they use when interacting with their children, she suggests that they speak or read in the language that they first told their child "I love you."

After Enz's presentation, conference participants had the opportunity to attend a variety of breakout sessions. Conference tracks included society, culture and literacy, community resources, language development and classroom practices. Sessions ranged from informational presentations such as language and brain development in young children, Arizona's bilingual education laws, promoting literacy with Native American families, and second language acquisition, to hands-on activities focusing on story-telling and multicultural arts and crafts.

At the end of a productive and educational

day, Hayden summarized the conference by restating the importance of literacy in its various forms. "Our stories," she said, "make us immortal." ■

Schmidt Named Assistant Director, Workforce Development Division

It's official. **Susan Schmidt** can now stop acting. On January 26th, **Annette Stein**, acting director, Human Services Department, named Schmidt the assistant director of WDD. Schmidt had served as acting assistant director since August of 2003.

Schmidt has been with WDD for five years. She is excited about the challenges and opportunities in front of her, and anxious to tackle the tasks at hand. "My goal is to continue to develop and to provide the most cutting edge and quality services to the community, and to create a positive and progressive work environment for all of our workers." Schmidt stated. She also expressed her interest in pursuing creative partnerships within the community to provide additional services to the customer. ■

Head Start Dresses for Success

Esther Duran, data entry operator for Head Start, is coordinating the fourth annual “Dress For Success,” mini-conference on Friday, February 6th from 8:00-5:00 pm at the Holiday Inn Express in Mesa. Designed to provide registered Head Start mothers and fathers with tools for achieving success in the workforce, the event promises to be event-packed and information-filled.

Guests may attend a variety of workshops ranging from interviewing techniques, resume writing, and conducting Internet job searches. The workshops will be presented by Workforce Development’s **Rick Griffin** and **David Lopez**. Head Start’s **Connie Padilla** and Finance’s **Jeanette Gonzales** will present makeover sessions, and **June Seville** and **Marie Musall** of Head Start will emphasize the importance of presenting the proper image. The event will culminate with a fashion show from 3:30-4:00 pm. ■

Run Ryan Run!

Congratulations to **Jody Ryan**, business workforce specialist, who completed the 13.1 mile run in P.F. Chang’s 1st Annual Rock and Roll Marathon and 1/2 Marathon, with a time of 2:01:11.

“I’ve always believed in setting goals and working to achieve them,” said Ryan. “I guess that’s why I’ve always enjoyed running. Running allows you to set a tangible goal and it’s pretty easy to quantify if you achieve it or not!”

Ryan also ran the Marine Corp Marathon in Washington D.C. a month after September 11th. “We ran right past the gaping hole in the Pentagon. It was one of the most amazing and memorable experiences, something I’ll never forget.” ■

Community Services Promotes Earned Income Tax Credit Program and Arizona Self-Help Website

In its ongoing efforts to provide resources and information to its clients, Community Services is promoting awareness of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program and Arizona Self-Help Website.

The EITC is a federal tax credit available to low- and moderate-income workers, mainly those raising children. The IRS estimates that between \$25 and \$64 million went unclaimed last year in the Phoenix area. As a result, efforts are underway to promote the EITC and have those individuals who are entitled, receive their tax refunds. To be eligible to claim the EITC, an individual must meet the following requirements:

- Earned income from employment or from self-employment.
- Earned income and adjusted gross income must be less than \$33,692 for more than one qualifying child (\$34,692, if married filing jointly); \$29,666 for one qualifying child (\$30,666 if married filing jointly); and \$11,230 for no child (\$12,239, if married filing jointly).

The Arizona Community Action Association presents Arizona Self-Help, an on-line prescreening tool designed to assist individuals in determining which community resources are available to help them and their families.

After logging onto www.arizonaselfhelp.org, visitors are asked to complete a series of questions. Based on the responses, the computer provides a list of possible programs for which an individual may qualify. The programs include food stamps; Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program (WIC); school lunch; emergency food; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); child care assistance; Head Start; medical assistance, including AHCCCS, S.O.B.R.A. and Kids Care; Earned Income Tax Credit; energy assistance programs, including LIHEAP; and federal housing assistance. ■

Maricopa County Families Needed to Host International Exchange Students

Have you and your family ever considered opening your home to an international exchange student? If so, contact Barbara J. Piirinen, a community representative for Academic Scholastic Association (ASA) International, who is currently placing foreign exchange students with Maricopa County families for either a semester or school year.

The exchange student will attend your local high school and participate in as many school activities as your school and family permit. All you need to provide is a room, which can be shared with a sibling of same sex, meals, and a nurturing family environment. Each student comes with his/her own spending money, health insurance, and phone card to make long distance calls.

For more information, visit www.ASAInternational.com. If you are interested in this exciting opportunity, please contact Barbara Piirinen at e-mail: B_piirinen@mcsso.maricopa.gov or thepiirinens@att.net; cell number (602) 317-3566, or at home (480) 461-5999. ■

Special Transportation Services Transports Healthcare for the Homeless Clients

Special Transportation Services (STS) began a pilot program providing transportation services to Maricopa County’s Healthcare for the Homeless program. STS recently transported its first Healthcare for the Homeless clients to the Maricopa Workforce Connections One-Stop Career Center in Peoria.

Some of the clients commented that they didn’t know the One-Stop was there. One client stated that he wished he would have known about STS’s transportation services last week because he turned down a job offer due to lack of transportation.

The STS van is expected to return on February 4th and transport at least eight more individuals from the Healthcare for Homeless program. Four of the eight people are returning clients. One of the original clients found a job and Work Links is now transporting that individual to and from work.

The STS staff is very excited about working with the Healthcare for Homeless program and its clients. ■

Kudos to Don Gutzman

*The following letter was written to **Stan Montoya**, Special Transportation Services Department’s transportation supervisor/fleet manager, commending Don Gutzman on his stellar work performance.*

Dear Sir:
We are writing to inform you of Don’s superior qualities, not only to his riders, but his general support of the Senior Center and its activities.

Don’s conscientious demeanor, patience and sincere concern for “his ladies,” and an occasional gentleman rider, is consistently outstanding. His willingness to assist us is demonstrated by his TLC to some of us who are forgetful, confused, and/or handicapped. He has been known to comfort many of us when we have a bad, sad day.

Don supports the Center activities; mostly on his own time, by attending the different functions, as a paid guest, spreading his good will and charm among the predominately female seniors. In example: at the Christmas Ball, he “danced” with one dear lady who suffers from multiple sclerosis and is wheelchair-bound. He held her up and danced the entire number - needless to say, she was most grateful.

We feel these aforementioned qualities, plus his numerous other fine attributes, should be brought to your attention so Don can receive the recognition and respect he deserves.

Sincerely yours,
Nancy Eminan
Spokesperson

The Survey Says . . .

Please take a few minutes to complete and return the survey below. The results will help us assess the effectiveness of this newsletter, and provide insight on how we can improve our communication efforts.

I read most issues of *Work Matters*.
☐ Yes ☐ No

The information in *Work Matters* is useful/relevant.
☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you read the newsletter if it were provided via e-mail instead of printed copy?
☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you satisfied with the newsletter's length and frequency?
☐ Yes ☐ No

How would you rate the newsletter's appearance (from 1-4, 1 = excellent; 4 = needs major improvement)
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Rate the types of articles you most enjoy reading about (1 = most interested; 4 = least interested)
☐ Articles about the county
☐ Articles about the department
☐ Articles about each division within HSD
☐ Articles about individual accomplishments
☐ Other _____

What other kinds of information would you like to have featured in the newsletter?

Suggestions on improving the newsletter.

Thank you for your input!
Please return the survey to:
Diane Hilow
234 N. Central, Suite 3201
Phoenix, AZ 85004
(Mail stop: 22A)



Around

County

Maricopa County Hosts NACo Conference

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is hosting its 2004 Annual Conference and Exposition at the Phoenix Civic Center Plaza from Friday, July 16 through Tuesday, July 20. As the host, Maricopa County is seeking 400 volunteers to help with all aspects of the conference. It will be a great opportunity to meet and mingle with county employees from across the country, as well as practice your social skills. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Diane Hilow at (602) 506-0297.

Employee Picnic

The Maricopa County employee picnic will be hosted by the Salt River Project, and held on Sunday, April 25th from 11:30-3:30 pm. The picnic area is located at 1 E. Continental Drive in Tempe, off of the 202 and Scottsdale/Rural Road. There will be softball and volleyball tournaments as well as a craft fair. Mark your calendars now, and look for more information in the upcoming months. ■

To Your Health

Wellness Challenge

Head Start staff has created a wellness program and encourages, as well as challenges, all Human Services Department staff to participate. The program will run from February through May, in four, four-week sessions. To participate in the Wellness Challenge:

- Organize a team (a team can consist of two or more people.)
- Register your team via e-mail, telephone or in person with one of the wellness committee members
 - Debbie Donofrio (602) 506-5878
ddonofrio@mail.maricopa.gov
 - Susana Hernandez (602) 506-4852
shernandez@mail.maricopa.gov
 - June Seville (602) 506-5743
jseville@mail.maricopa.gov
- After registering, participants will receive a “Wellness Challenge” booklet. Each team member will set individual weekly goals in four wellness areas: activity, nutrition, social and spiritual/emotional. Participants will log the results of each wellness criteria on a daily basis.
- Results are turned in to the wellness committee at the end of each four week session.

The Wellness Challenge is an excellent way to maintain or improve your health and have fun at the same time. ■